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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1349  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 002198

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E AND A/S CARSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/15/2019  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [PTER](#) [SO](#)  
SUBJECT: SOMALIA -SOMALILAND PRESIDENT STRONG-ARMS  
OPPOSITION CHAIRMAN SILANYO INTO NAMING NEW NEC  
COMMISSIONER

Classified By: Counselor for Somalia Affairs Bob Patterson for reasons  
1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Somaliland President Riyale on October 19 forwarded the seven National Electoral Commission nominees to the Guurti, signaling both forward momentum toward elections and Riyale's ability to manipulate the process. Riyale submitted the names of his nominees only after the Kulmiye, UCID, and Guurti Chairmen accepted his rejection of their initial NEC nominees and named new candidates. Silanyo, during an October 19 telecon with Somalia Unit PolOff opined that Riyale is trying to sabotage elections. Silanyo said he and the Guurti chairman agreed to change their nominees because they did not want to waste time but that Riyale's actions showed that the President will do whatever it takes to retain power. We think the parties ability to move beyond the NEC issues is a positive development and are encouraging all parties to remain flexible during the election process. However, Riyale is likely to attempt to manipulate the process at every stage. Moving forward, we will strongly urge Riyale to take the lead in honoring the spirit of the Six Point Agreement and the integrity of the election process. End Summary.

12. (C) Somaliland President Riyale on October 19 forwarded the seven NEC nominees, including those he had accepted from the opposition parties, to the Guurti, signaling both forward momentum toward elections and Riyale's ability to manipulate the process. Riyale submitted the names of his three nominees only after the Kulmiye, UCID, and Guurti Chairmen accepted his rejection of their initial NEC nominees and named new candidates. (Note: Somaliland electoral law gives the parliament, not the President, the authority to consider NEC nominees. However, UCID chairman Faisal Ali Warabe on October 14 told us he was encouraging Kulmiye chairman Silanyo to accept Riyale's rejection, as Faisal had done, in the interest of forward momentum on the election process. Riyale, in a likely attempt to stall naming his own nominees and in an effort to seek a NEC composition he found more agreeable, rejected the first two opposition party nominations for the NEC on technical grounds. Riyale complained that the UCID nominee had served on the previous NEC and that the Kulmiye nominee was a party board member. In addition, Riyale rejected one of the Guurti's nominees based on dubious accusations that the nominee had once been charged with a crime (ref a). End Note.) Riyale submitted the following list of nominees to the Guurti:

UDUB Nominees:

-- Mohamed Ahmed Hersi Gelle  
-- Isse Yusuf Haji Mohamed  
-- Farah Abiib Aden

Gurruti Nominees:

-- Raabbi Sharif Abdi Mohamed  
-- Abdirahman Mohamed Ismail

KULMIYE Nominee:

-- Ali-Khadar Hassan Osman

UCID Nominee:

-- Abdifatah Ibrahim Hassan

13. (C) Silanyo, during an October 19 telecon with Somalia Unit PolOff opined that Riyale is trying to sabotage elections. Silanyo said he and the Guurti chairman agreed to change their nominees to the NEC because they did not want to waste time but that Riyale's actions showed that the President will do whatever it takes to retain power. Silanyo angrily recounted the fact that only the parliament has the right to reject NEC nominees. He said he and the Guurti chairman argued for many hours over whether or not, in reaction to Riyale's demands, to put forward new names and finally agreed to do so in order to move the election process to the next step. Silanyo asked PolOff to ensure strong messages are passed to Riyale in order to prevent the President from manipulating future steps in electoral process.

14. (C) Comment: We think the parties' ability to move beyond the NEC issues is a positive development and are encouraging all stakeholders to remain flexible during the

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election process. However, we also think Riyale is likely to attempt to manipulate the process at every stage. Moving forward, we will strongly urge Riyale to take the lead in honoring the spirit of the Six Point Agreement and the integrity of the election process. End Comment.

RANNEBERGER